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AUTHOR Charner, Ivan; Fraser, Bryna Shore
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ABSTRACT

A study examined the employment of Hispanics in the fast-food industry. Data were obtained from a national survey of employees at 279 fast-food restaurants from seven companies in which 194 (4.2 percent) of the 4,660 respondents reported being Hispanic. Compared with the total sample, Hispanic fast-food employees were slightly less likely to be female (62 versus 66 percent) and somewhat younger (75 versus 71 percent below the age of 20). More Hispanic fast-food industry employees were in general rather than vocational or academic programs, with fully 18 percent not knowing which program they were in. The grades of the respondents were fairly high, with only 14 percent reporting grade averages of C or below. The work ethic appeared to be alive and well among the Hispanic respondents, with 63 percent expecting work to be the central part of their lives and 85 percent saying they would work even if they didn't need to. Most planned to continue their education beyond high school. There was some link between employment in a fast-food restaurant and school for about one-fourth of the Hispanic respondents. As was true for their non-Hispanic counterparts in the survey, the Hispanic employees were able to learn a number of transferable job-related skills. (MN)

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National
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1302
18th Street, NW
Suite 501

Washington, DC
20036

202 887-6800

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HISPANICS IN FAST FOOD JOBS

by

Ivan Charner

and

Bryna Shore Fraser

May 1984

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Major fast food companies, seeking a larger market share among Hispanics and other minority groups, are pursuing new or expanded business in urban neighborhoods. Concurrently, many large fast food chains are offering their hourly employees opportunities to advance through their restaurants' formal management programs. As one of the nations's largest sources of employment, and as an industry with mobility opportunities, it is important and timely to learn more about the character and impact of fast food jobs.

In this paper we examine Hispanics in fast food jobs. A number of questions about these jobs for Hispanic hourly employees are explored:

1. Who works in fast food jobs and why?
2. What is the value of the fast food job experience?
3. What is the impact of working in a fast food job?
4. What are the nature and quality of training and supervision?
5. Why do employees leave their fast food jobs?

In addition, differences between Hispanic employees and those from other racial/ethnic groups will be discussed.

The data for this paper are drawn from a larger study of employment in the fast food industry, conducted by the National Institute for Work and Learning. The study sample consisted of 7,741 hourly employees on the May or June 1982 payrolls of 279 fast food restaurants from seven companies: Arby's, Del Taco, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Krystal, McDonald's, Roy Rogers, and White Castle. A response rate of 66 percent was obtained for the study. Of the 4,660 respondents in our sample, 194 (4.2%) reported that they were Hispanic. All of the findings reported in this paper are based on this sample of Hispanic hourly employees.

Profile of Hispanic Fast Food Employees

In order to provide a background for looking at Hispanic employment in the fast food industry, it is important to know who, among Hispanics, works in fast food jobs and why. Table 1 provides a breakdown of Hispanic employees on selected characteristics. The table also provides a comparison with the total sample of hourly fast food employees. As the table shows, Hispanic employees are somewhat

Table 1

SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF FAST FOOD EMPLOYEES
(In Percentages)

Characteristic	Hispanics	Total Sample
A. Sex		
Male	38	34
Female	62	66
B. Age		
14-15	2	1
16-17	33	27
18-20	40	43
21-24	11	14
25 or older	14	6
C. Racial/Ethnic group		
Black	—	16
White	—	77
Hispanic	—	5
Other	—	3
D. With whom do you live? *		
Father	48	55
Mother	67	66
Siblings	59	56
Spouse	18	17
Children	15	17
Other relatives	8	7
Other non-relatives	7	7
By myself	2	3
E. Father's education		
Less than high school	44	27
High school graduate	22	30
Some college	6	12
A.A. degree	3	4
B.A. degree or greater	13	19
Don't know	13	9
F. Mother's education		
Less than high school	56	27
High school graduate	20	39
Some college	5	13
A.A. degree	5	5
B.A. degree or greater	6	10
Don't know	10	5

* Multiple responses possible

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less likely to be female (62% vs. 66%) and are somewhat younger (75% 20 years old or younger vs. 71%). Sixty percent of the Hispanic employees describe themselves as Mexican American or Chicano while 40% describe themselves as Puerto Rican or other Latin American. As with the total sample, well over half of the Hispanic employees live with their parents and siblings. Over one-quarter, however, indicate that they live alone, with non-relatives, or with a spouse. The Hispanic employees come from homes with parents of low educational attainments, with two-thirds of the respondents' fathers and three-quarters of their mothers having a high school education or less. A much larger proportion of Hispanic employees have parents with low educational attainment than do other fast food employees.

In terms of their own educational attainment, we find a larger proportion of Hispanic employees still in high school (40% vs. 30%) and therefore fewer who had graduated from high school (48% vs. 64%). About 40 percent of the Hispanic employees have continued their education beyond high school with 22 percent having attended or currently attending two-and four-year colleges. The Hispanic employees also have high educational expectations. Forty percent expect to graduate from a two-year college, and a similar percentage expect to graduate from a four year college. The educational expectations of the Hispanic employees, however, are somewhat lower than for other fast food employees.

When we looked at high school programs, we found the highest proportion of Hispanic employees reporting they were in a general program in high school (36%) compared to the proportion in academic (27%) and vocational or technical (17%) programs. Fully 18 percent did not know which high school program they were in. The high school grade averages for Hispanic employees were fairly high, with 12 percent reporting A or A minus and another 40 percent reporting B or B plus. Only 14 percent of these employees reported grade averages of C or lower.

Table 2

HISPANIC FAST FOOD EMPLOYEES' ATTITUDES ABOUT WORK IN GENERAL

Attitudes	Percentage Disagree	Percentage Neutral	Percentage Agree
Like work you can forget about after day is over	41	25	35
Work is nothing more than making a living	64	14	22
Expect work to be central part of my life	15	22	63
Want to do best in job	5	7	88
Would like to stay in same job most of adult life	44	21	35
Would want to work even if didn't have to *	15	—	85

* Response categories for this question were "would want to work" (agree) and "would not want to work" (disagree).

As Table 2 shows, the "work ethic" is alive and well among these Hispanic fast food employees. Sixty-four percent believe that work is more than making a living, and 63 percent expect work to be a central part of their lives. More importantly, 88 percent want to do their best in their jobs, and 85 percent report that they would want to work even if they didn't have to. It is interesting to note, however, that over one-third (35%) of the respondents would like to stay in the same job most of their adult lives. With most persons changing jobs seven to ten times in their lives and changing careers three to five times, this expectation seems unrealistic.

One-quarter of the Hispanic employees (compared with 19% overall) report that they make special scheduling arrangements with their schools in order to work in their fast food job, 13 percent receive school credit for working on their job, and 16 percent report that their supervisor provides their school with a report on how well they do their job.

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This profile suggests that Hispanic employees in the fast food industry are likely to be:

- female (62%),
- relatively young (73 percent are 16-20 years old),
- Mexican American or Chicano (60%),
- living at home with parents,
- from homes with parents with low educational attainments,
- currently attending high school (40%) or high school graduates (48%),
- good students (52 percent with grades of B or better), and
- continuing or planning to continue their education beyond high school.

Except for the high proportion of female employees, the population of Hispanic hourly fast food employees tends to look very much like that of Hispanic youth in general.* There are, however, a number of variations in this pattern which must be noted. First, there is a relatively large proportion of Hispanic hourly fast food employees who are 21 years old or older. Second, there is a fairly large group of Hispanic employees who are married, have children, or live away from their parents. Third, well over half of these hourly fast food employees were in high school while they were employed in their fast food jobs. Fourth, about one in five had attended or was currently attending a two or four year college.

Hispanic fast food employees are educationally mobile, aspiring to levels of education well beyond those of their parents. They also believe in the work ethic, expecting work to be a central part of their lives and wanting to do their best in their jobs. Finally, we find some link between the fast food job and schooling for about one-quarter of these fast food employees.

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* See William A. Diaz, Hispanic Youth Employment: An Overview, Hispanic Policy Development Project, March 1983.

The Fast Food Job

Another objective of this paper is to report on the fast food job for Hispanic employees including: how they found the job; reasons for having the job; job duties; hours worked; length of employment; pay; fringe benefits; and reasons for terminating employment.

Most Hispanic fast food employees found out about the job opening from friends (35%) or by walking in and applying (27%). A slightly higher proportion of Hispanics than any other group learned about the job opening from siblings. It is clear that individuals must learn about vacancies through word of mouth or by walking in and applying.

Hispanic fast food employees have their jobs for a large number of reasons, as shown in Table 3. Most of these employees work to have money for other things (72%), to support themselves (65%), to gain experience (54%), and to learn skills (52%).

Table 3

REASONS GIVEN BY HISPANIC EMPLOYEES FOR HAVING FAST FOOD JOB

Reason	Percentage Very Important
Help support family	40
Support myself	65
Have money for other things	72
Experience of working	54
Parents want me to work	22
Friends work here	9
Learn skills	52
Save for future education	43

When we compare Hispanic with Black and White employees we find the following:

- Hispanic (40%) and Black employees (44%) are much more likely than White employees (21%) to have their jobs to help support their families.
- Fifty-four percent of Hispanic and 58 percent of Black employees have their jobs to gain work experience compared to 43 percent of White employees.
- Over half of Hispanic (52%) and Black (53%) employees have their jobs to learn skills compared to 32 percent of White employees.

We assume that these differences are due, in part, to the economic situation of these groups. That is, we suspect that among Hispanic and Black employees who still live at home there is a need for at least part of the wages earned to go to help support the family. Hispanic and Black employees are also less likely to have a great deal of work experience or to have an abundance of marketable skills. As a result, these employees have their jobs not only for financial reasons but as a way of acquiring skills and work experience.

Most hourly fast food employees are required to perform multiple tasks in their fast food restaurants. Almost all employees, however, have primary duties for which they are responsible. Among Hispanic employees, 45 percent are responsible for front of the store activities. Responsibility for administrative tasks is the primary responsibility for 28 percent of these employees. Back of the store activities (18%), hosting in dining area (7%), and maintanence (2%) are the primary responsibilities for smaller proportions of Hispanic employees. It is interesting to note that Hispanic employees are more likely than Black (22%) or White (22%) employees to have primary responsibility for administrative tasks such as training and supervising of other hourly employees.

The mean number of hours worked per week for these Hispanic hourly fast food employees was 31 which is higher than White employees (mean of 29 hours) and lower than Black employees (mean of 33 hours). While a large proportion of these employees are clearly part-time, working 20 hours or less per week (18%), an even

larger group is full-time employees working 36 or more hours per week (33%). When we look at the proportion of Hispanic employees who work 31 or more hours per week, the percentage increases to 55 percent. Hispanic employees are likely to be working to help support their families and therefore work more hours so they can bring home more money.

The mean length of employment of Hispanic fast food employees was 14.8 months. This was the lowest among the three racial/ethnic groups. The mean for White employees was 19.3 months and for Black employees 17.3 months. Over half of the Hispanic employees (56%) were employed for 12 months or less (33% for six months or less) with 16 percent employed for more than two years.

The mean hourly wage for Hispanic employees was $3.71. This was equal to that of White employees and 11 cents per hour higher than Black employees. Hourly wage rates are related to age, length of employment, and hours worked per week. Hispanic employees 25 years old or older earn $4.18 per hour compared to $3.60 per hour for younger Hispanic employees. Hispanic employees employed for six months or less earn $3.41 per hour compared with $3.66 for 7-12 months; $3.80 for 13-18 months; $3.95 for 19-24 months; $4.03 for 25-36 months; and $4.27 for 37 months or longer. Hispanic employees who worked 36 or more hours per week had hourly wages of $4.01. Those who worked 21-35 hours per week had hourly wages of $3.59 and those who worked 20 hours or fewer per week had hourly wages of $3.47. We also find a small difference in hourly wage rates between Hispanic males and females, with males making $3.71 per hour and females $3.65 per hour.

In Table 4 we show the fringe benefits received by Hispanic fast food employees. We see that almost all of these employees get either free meals (69%) or a discount on meals (36%). We also find that 41 percent get paid vacations, with considerably smaller proportions getting other fringe benefits. Many benefits are dependent on working full time. Because a relatively large proportion of Hispanic

Table 4

FRINGE BENEFITS OF HISPANIC FAST FOOD EMPLOYEES

Benefit	Percent Reporting That They Get the Benefit
Free meals	69
Discount on meals	36
An allowance to maintain uniform	21
Paid vacation	41
Paid sick leave	7
Paid holiday	19
Insurance benefits	24
Educational benefits	3

employees work less than 36 hours per week, they are not likely to receive fringe benefits other than free or discounted meals.

Forty-three percent of the Hispanic group were no longer employed in their fast food job at the time of the survey. This compared to 32 percent of the non-Hispanic employees. Only five percent of these Hispanic employees were fired (10% for others), with the remaining 95 percent terminating on their own. The reasons for quitting are presented in Table 5.

Four out of ten Hispanic employees who quit their fast food job did so to take a different job (19%) or to return to school (22%). Over one-quarter quit because the pay was too low (16%) or they were not satisfied with their schedule (11%). Most Hispanic employees who terminated from their fast food jobs did so on their own in order to gain new work or educational experience or because of problems with pay or schedules.

Table 5

REASONS GIVEN BY HISPANIC EMPLOYEES FOR QUITTING FAST FOOD JOB

	Percent Reporting Reason
To take a different job	19
To return to school	22
Did not like work	5
Pay was too low	16
Problems with transportation	3
Did not like coworkers	2
Not satisfied with schedule	11
Did not like supervisor	9
Other unspecified reasons	14

Training

Another aspect of the fast food job is training. Hispanics, like all employees, received training from a number of different sources. This is shown in Table 6.

While the largest single source of training is on-the-job experience (85%), Hispanic employees received training from a number of other sources including managers (55%), assistant managers (61%), supervisors (54%), coworkers (73%), training films or slides (50%), and printed instructions (45%). After on-the-job experience, training by an individual in the store is the most often used source of training, followed by training materials and, then, outside store personnel. Which of these other sources of training is used to supplement on-the-job experience seems to depend on individual store or company policies, with some relying on special trainers while others use training films/slides or printed materials.

Table 6

SOURCE AND USEFULNESS OF TRAINING RECEIVED BY HISPANIC FAST FOOD EMPLOYEES
(In Percentages)

Training Source	Some or A Lot Received	Some or A Lot of Help
Manager	55	70
Assistant manager	61	77
Crew chief/ supervisor	54	73
Coworker(s)	73	83
Special trainer	35	67
District manager/ supervisor	13	43
Area manager/ supervisor	15	44
Training films or slides	50	64
Printed instructions	45	61
On-the-job (experience)	85	94

Table 6 also shows how useful each source of training is. Not only is on-the-job experience the most often used source of training, it is also the most useful source of training (94% found it to be some or a lot of help). The only sources of training that were not considered useful by over half of the Hispanic fast food employees trained by that source were district and area managers. Regardless of the source of training (except district and area managers), most Hispanic workers found the training from each source to be useful.

Supervision

Management personnel in a fast food restaurant have a large number of responsibilities. They hire and fire employees, schedule work hours, train employees, order food and supplies, supervise employees, and deal with customers. They make sure that the restaurant is effectively and efficiently run. Because of the central role played by management personnel, it is important to see how Hispanic employees perceive their managers and supervisors. Almost nine out of ten Hispanic hourly employees are scheduled by their managers (56%) or assistant managers (31%). Half are satisfied with the way their time is scheduled, with 27 percent dissatisfied.

A second area of management responsibility is training. We found managers, assistant managers, and supervisors supplementing on-the-job experience for over half of the Hispanic employees, and we found these employees highly satisfied with the training they received from these management personnel.

Day-to-day supervision is one of the most important responsibilities of management personnel. Forty-seven percent of Hispanic employees are supervised on a day-to-day basis by assistant managers and 30 percent by managers. Another 14 percent are supervised by crew chiefs. Over three-quarters of Hispanic employees feel they are adequately supervised on a day-to-day basis.

In general, Hispanic employees feel that management personnel handle training, scheduling, and supervisory responsibilities well. They also tend to have positive opinions about their management personnel, as shown in Table 7.

The vast majority of Hispanic employees feel that all management personnel treat employees fairly, perform their job well, provide adequate supervision, deal well with people, keep them informed, and don't play favorites.

Table 7

HISPANIC EMPLOYEE ASSESSMENT OF MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL

Dimension	Percentage Agreeing about Manager	Percentage Agreeing about Assistant Manager	Percentage Agreeing about Supervisor
Treats employees fairly	75	70	72
Performs job well	76	77	81
Provides adequate supervision	74	74	76
Plays favorites	44	37	29
Treats me better than most	21	21	15
Treats me worse than most	11	9	7
Deals well with people	77	70	76
Keeps me informed	73	72	74

Effects of Fast Food Job

Fast food employees are required to perform a wide variety of tasks. Many of these are specific to fast food jobs, but a number are clealy transferable to other jobs and roles. The training in these tasks and the continuous and repeated performance of these tasks help employees master a diverse set of skills. Table 8 shows the job related skills that the fast food job helped develop for Hispanic employees.

Since most fast food employees operate cash registers and/or other types of machines, it is not surprising to find that the fast food job helped (some or a great deal) Hispanic employees develop skills related to operation of a cash register (83%), operation of food preparation machines (83%), and operation of other machines (80%).

Table 8

IMPACT OF FAST FOOD JOB ON JOB RELATED SKILLS
FOR HISPANIC EMPLOYEES

	Percentage Helped Develop			
Job Related Skills	Not at All	A Little	Some	A Lot
Operate a cash register	12	6	15	67
Operate food preparation machines	7	10	25	58
Operate other machines	8	12	33	47
Train other employees	10	13	34	43
Inventory or stock control	40	12	23	25
Supervise other employees	28	18	27	28
Bookkeeping or accounting	71	12	10	8
Food preparation	4	10	27	60

In terms of developing management or administrative skills, we see from Table 8 that fast food jobs have somewhat less impact than they do on learning how to operate equipment. Specifically, almost eight out of ten employees developed (some or a great deal) skills related to training other employees. Over half learned supervisory skills, five out of ten learned inventory control, and less than 20 percent developed bookkeeping or accounting skills. Finally, we found that almost nine out of ten Hispanic employees feel that their job helped them learn the skills associated with food preparation.

Overall, the fast food job offers Hispanic employees an opportunity to perform a variety of duties which clearly help develop a number of job related skills. Little or no variation in the acquisition of these job related skills is found when Hispanic employees are compared to employees from other racial/ethnic groups.

In addition to job related skills, we examined how the fast food job affected the development of general employability skills. Such skills are important not only for obtaining future jobs but for being successful on a job and for progressing in a career. They are of particular concern to employers who hire youth and others with limited work experience. For almost two-thirds (64%) of Hispanic employees, the fast food job experience helped them become aware of how a business runs. Nine out of ten reported that their job helped them learn the skills associated with dealing with people, and 95 percent reported the jobs helped them learn to work with others (teamwork).

These Hispanic fast food employees also learn other employability skills as a result of their fast food job. Many of these skills are basic for successful job performance and for functioning as a member of a family, a community, or the larger society. While many of these are taught in school, in the home, and in other organizations, it is most interesting to see the relatively high proportion of Hispanic employees who feel that their fast food job helped them learn these skills, which include: dealing with customers (85%); taking directions (79%); getting along with coworkers (77%); being on time (67%); finishing an assigned task (75%); taking responsibility for mistakes (73%); being dependable (71%); being well groomed (56%); managing own money (68%); saving for what is wanted (64%); and getting along on a certain amount of money (65%).

It is clear that the fast food job has helped Hispanic employees learn employability skills related to sales/service, functioning on a job, and financial/money matters. It is noteworthy that the fast food job is more likely to help Hispanic employees to learn most of these skills than other employees. This is shown in Table 9.

Table 9

DEVELOPMENT OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS FOR FAST FOOD EMPLOYEES FROM DIFFERENT RACIAL/ETHNIC GROUPS*
(Percent Helped a Great Deal)

	Racial/Ethnic Group		
Employability Skill	Hispanic	White	Black
Being on time	43	29	39
Finishing an assigned task	41	29	36
Taking responsibility for mistakes	45	27	34
Being dependable	45	31	43
Being well groomed	34	19	32
Managing my own money	36	19	29
Saving for what I want	31	20	29
Getting along on a certain amount of money	33	21	25

* Only employability skills which showed relatively large differences are included.

We conclude from our findings that the fast food experience is helping Hispanic employees to learn these basic skills. They may be less likely to develop these skills through other experiences or from other institutions and organizations and are perhaps more likely to have their fast food job help them learn the skill than are employees who have the opportunity to learn these skills elsewhere. For many of these Hispanic employees, it appears that the fast food job is the primary arena for learning these skills.

Another way of looking at the effects of the fast food work experience is to determine how Hispanic employees feel about the effects of the job. We assessed how the fast food job affects different aspects of the Hispanic employees' lives including school, friends and social life, and family. The fast food job has only a

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minimal effect on school work. Only 26 percent feel that their job interferes with school work. Nine percent feel they do better in school, and 14 percent feel they do worse in school since they have been working in the fast food restaurant. It would seem that the fast food job does not interfere with school work and does not affect performance in school for most of these Hispanic employees.

Fully nine out of ten Hispanic employees make new friends on the job, and 61 percent feel they get along better with people. Forty percent reported that their social life is about the same as before, and an equal proportion (38%) feel it has changed. One third reported, however, that they don't see their friends as much as they would like. Working in fast food jobs, therefore, seems to be a "mixed bag" for Hispanic employees in terms of their social lives and their friends. We also find that over one-quarter of the Hispanic employees feel that they get along better with their parents since working at their fast food job.

How do the significant others of these Hispanic employees feel about their working at fast food jobs? The answer to this question is found in Table 10.

Table 10

PERCEIVED ATTITUDES OF SIGNIFICANT OTHERS FOR HISPANIC EMPLOYEES

Significant Other	Percent Approving
Mother	68
Father	66
Sibling	61
Spouse *	62
Teacher	70
School counselor	63
Friends	67

* Calculated for only those employees who are married.

The table shows that a large proportion of Hispanic parents approve of their children's fast food employment. Sixty-eight percent of mothers and 66 percent of fathers approve; only 7 percent of mothers and 15 percent of fathers disapprove of their children working at fast food jobs. Siblings (61%), spouses (62%); friends (67%), teachers (70%), and counselors (63%) also approve of these Hispanic employees working at their fast food jobs. We would conclude from these findings that each category of significant others of Hispanic employees generally approves of these employees' working at fast food jobs.

Another aspect of the effects of fast food employment is the fast food employees' sense of job satisfaction. Sixty-seven percent of Hispanic fast food employees indicated that they were satisfied with their fast food job. Twenty percent were dissatisfied. As a group, Hispanic employees are more satisfied than are other employees (61% of White and 56% of Black employees are satisfied). A number of subdimensions of satisfaction were also looked at. We found the following for Hispanic employees:

- 68 percent enjoy working in the fast food restaurant;
- 52 percent are proud to work there;
- 12 percent are embarrassed to work there;
- 60 percent like the job more now than when they started;
- 22 percent like the job less now than when they started;
- 25 percent are bored working there;
- 44 percent feel they are not adequately paid for the job done;
- 86 percent like their coworkers; and
- 70 percent like most of their customers.

As with the overall assessment of job satisfaction, the findings on the subdimensions of job satisfaction suggest that a majority of Hispanic fast food employees are satisfied with their job. The only area of dissatisfaction is with adequacy of pay. These employees do not feel they are adequately paid for the job that they do.

Future Goals in the Fast Food Industry

Another objective of this study was to learn about plans of Hispanic fast food employees. Earlier we discussed the mobility goals of these employees in terms of education. Here we look at their mobility goals both within the store they work at and within the company. Almost two-thirds of the Hispanic employees want a more responsible position in the restaurant, with smaller proportions who would like to become assistant managers (44%) and managers (38%). Over half feel that they have a good chance to move up within the restaurant.

Hispanic (and Black) employees were found more likely to aspire to higher level positions than White employees. This may be due to differences in perceptions about the overall labor market. We assume that larger proportions of Hispanic (and Black) employees aspire to higher positions within the restaurant because they believe their chances for career mobility and security are not as good outside of the fast food industry. White employees, on the other hand, are more likely to consider other career options as realistic. Local and national economic conditions may be affecting the mobility goals of these employees. Hispanics, who often find themselves in the lowest level jobs, may view the fast food industry as their means of mobility, and, as a result, they are more likely than White employees to aspire to more responsible and higher level positions in the fast food restaurant.

Over half (54%) of these Hispanic employees say they would like to move up to a more responsible position in the company, while only 17 percent say they would not

like to move up in the company. Three out of ten Hispanic employees report that they would like to become an executive, compared with 38 percent who say they would not like such a position. Hispanics were more likely than Whites to want to move up in the company, but no real difference was found with regard to being an executive in the company.

Recommendations

We begin by focusing on immediate actions that could be taken by fast food employers to improve the work experience for Hispanic and other employees at the store level. It is likely that the implementation of the following recommendations would not only enhance the work experience for the employees but would also result in a better operated and perhaps more productive unit for the employer.

1. Store Management

The importance of the manager and assistant manager(s), and the employees' perception of how they run the store, cannot be overemphasized. The manager and assistant manager(s) set the tone for the work environment and determine, in large measure, the quality of the work experience for the employees under them. Two issues appear to be key for all hourly employees in regard to management: fairness in application of company/store policies and sensitivity to the concerns of hourly employees ("people" skills). Based on the study findings, supported by anecdotal information provided by survey respondents, the following actions related to these two issues are recommended:

1a. Managers and assistant managers should enforce all company/franchisee policies in an equitable, uniform fashion. This is particularly important to hourly employees in relation to pay raises. Policies regarding when raises are to be given, the amount of each raise, and any special conditions governing the awarding of raises should be uniformly adhered to by all management personnel. If there is no standard policy regarding pay raises, as well as other areas such as fringe benefits and termination, such policies should be developed and implemented in each store.

1b. Managers and assistant managers should ensure that the scheduling of hours to be worked is done through as fair and equitable a process as possible. Scheduling should be done on some impartial basis - perhaps priority could be established by length of employment or pay level. Of additional concern to hourly employees is being guaranteed work for at least a minimum number of hours each week. Every effort should be made to accommodate employees' requests for a minimal number of hours. In addition, attempts should be made, whenever possible, to schedule convenient work hours for those employees who are both attending school and working.

1c. Criteria for selection of managers, assistant managers, and manager trainees should include strong "people" skills and sensitivity to the needs of Hispanic and Black employees. Applicants should be screened for the ability to deal well with employees under pressured conditions and should exhibit good human relations skills, not just task management skills. When looking for more managers and assistant managers, hourly employees in the store should be the first people considered. They not only know the pertinent aspects of management but they know what works best when dealing with hourly employees. Given Hispanic employees' aspirations to move up in the restaurant and company, they should be offered increased opportunities for management training.

1d. Management training should include "how to manage people" - employer/employee relations and sensitization to the needs of employees and customers. Courses might include communications skills, training techniques, counseling, community relations, performance appraisal, and sensitization to the culture and needs of specific groups of employees and customers.

2. Hourly Pay and Fringe Benefits

The issue of "overworked and underpaid" is clearly of concern to a large number of Hispanic hourly fast food employees. Many of them feel that the wages they earn are not adequate compensation for the work that they do. The recommendations that follow relate both to pay and fringe benefits and are aimed at reducing employee dissatisfaction with the total compensation package.

2a. As noted earlier in the management section, there should be a standard company/franchisee policy regarding pay raises. This policy should cover

when raises are to be given, the amount of each raise, and any special conditions governing the awarding of raises (e.g. whether the employee is required to pass a written or oral test in order to qualify for a raise). Such a policy might be based simply on length of employment in the store (as is evidently the most widely used criterion in the industry currently) or, preferably, on a combination of merit plus length of employment. If tests are a requirement for obtaining a raise, attention should be paid to ensure that such tests are not culturally biased and do not favor any particular racial/ethnic group.

2b. Other alternative forms of compensation for hourly employees should be considered, and company policies should be implemented uniformly in all stores. Some companies/franchisees already offer incentives, mainly at the management level, such as bonuses or a share of the profits, if a certain volume of sales is reached in the store. Consideration should be given to offering similar incentives to hourly employees.

2c. Very few companies offer any educational benefits to their hourly employees. Study findings indicate that the educational aspirations of these employees are quite high (40% of the Hispanic employees expect to attend a two-year college; a similar percentage expect to attend a four-year college). Companies may want to consider offering financial assistance/scholarships for further education/training to hourly employees as an additional enhancement of the total wage and benefits package. They may also consider offering remedial education opportunities to those employees with low educational attainments.

3. Mobility Within the Restaurant and Company

Study findings indicate that a majority of Hispanic hourly employees would like to move up to a more responsible position in the store and in the company. This leads to the following recommendations:

3a. Most fast food companies currently recruit their management trainees from outside their restaurants. Given the high level of interest in promotion among hourly employees, companies should recruit management trainees from the ranks of the restaurants' hourly employees. A career ladder could be developed for progression from entry level jobs through supervisory/crew chief positions into administrative and managerial training slots, with eventual promotion into management level jobs. Early training could take place within the store with supplemental training offered at the regional or national level.

3b. The study revealed that the desire for promotion within the restaurant and the company is particularly strong among Hispanics. Companies should make every effort to promote from their ranks and offer opportunities for management training to interested Hispanic hourly employees. This is particularly true for stores located in areas with large Hispanic populations and for stores with high proportions of Hispanic employees.

The above recommendations focused on actions that could be taken by fast food employers (and by other employers with large numbers of "secondary labor market" entry level jobs). We now turn our attention to the broader recommendations that grow out of the study findings.

4. Links to Education and the Community

The study findings show that for the vast majority of fast food employees, there is no link between their job and their schooling. Although about one-fifth overall (and one-quarter of the Hispanic employees) report that they make special scheduling arrangements with their school in order to work at the fast food restaurant, very few receive academic credit for their work or report that their supervisor provides a report to their school on how well they do at work.

4a. Given the fact that fast food employees are learning both job related and general employability skills on the job, many of which are applicable to other spheres of life, schools should be attempting to integrate and reinforce this experience through the curriculum and counseling. Many of the skills that fast food employees gain from the job (e.g. teamwork, dealing with people, awareness of how a business runs) could be incorporated into existing career education programs, using the actual fast food work experience rather than a hypothetical work situation as the basis for educational exploration. Counselors and advisors should also encourage students to consider fast food jobs for part-time work experience, particularly for those young people who have little opportunity to learn employability skills through other experiences.

4b. Earlier the high educational aspirations of these Hispanic fast food employees were noted, as well as a strong interest in moving up to more responsible positions in the fast food restaurant. There appears to be a mutuality of interests that would be served by closer links between school administrators of work experience, cooperative education, and distributive education programs, on the one hand, and fast food employers, on the other, with the greatest benefit accruing to the student/fast food employee. For example, programs could be developed which provide the student/employee with progressively more responsible work in the restaurant, supported by coordinated coursework and store training, with promotion into a management slot at the restaurant upon graduation from high school. Similar programs could also be conducted at the community college level, offering participants the opportunity to move up through the fast food company. It is likely that such programs would be of particular interest to Hispanic employees desiring to move up in their store or company.

4c. Job search and job placement personnel and counselors (inside the schools and in the community) should use the study findings to advise potential

fast food employees on the nature of the fast food work experience. The data show that such work can be satisfying, especially if the prospective employee knows what to look for in a particular restaurant, but that it can also be demanding. Counselors should advise potential fast food employees to ask questions regarding pay and fringe benefit policies, opportunities for promotion, and scheduling processes. Prospective employees should also be encouraged to talk to current employees of the restaurant regarding the manager and assistant manager(s) and their relationships with hourly employees. It would also be beneficial for the counselor or placement person to establish contact with the fast food companies and store managers serving the community. These companies are almost always recruiting hourly employees and would likely welcome referrals from a reliable source. Establishment of such a relationship would give the counselor the opportunity to determine first-hand what the quality of work experience in a particular store or company is likely to be and whether the needs of Hispanic students will be met and well-served by the fast food work experience.

Summary and Conclusions

This report has focused on Hispanic employment in fast food jobs. We have looked at the profile of Hispanic employees, the nature of their jobs, the training they received, and their supervision. In addition, we have tried to assess some of the effects of the fast food job on the skills, plans, and attitudes of Hispanic employees. We also compared Hispanic employees with other employees on a number of these factors.

We found a number of differences between Hispanic and other employees, but we also found a large degree of similarity across racial/ethnic groups of fast food employees. We discovered that a "dual labor market" apparently exists within the fast food store. For many Hispanic employees, the fast food job is best characterized as being part of the "secondary labor market". For a large proportion, however, the fast food job is considered to be part of the "primary labor market". Together, in one store, we found Hispanic youth who were working part-time, to earn money to help support their families or for other things while they were going to school or to save for their future education, working side by side with other youth and older employees who were working full-time to help support themselves or their own families and who considered their fast food job as their

occupation or as an early stage in a hoped for career in the fast food industry or some other related field.

We found a surprising amount of job stability, relatively high levels of job satisfaction, hourly wage rates above the minimum wage, large proportions of Hispanic employees who work to help support their families or themselves, and considerable impact on the development of employability and job skills. This is not to say that the entire picture of fast food employment for Hispanic employees is a positive one. Our findings suggest that Hispanic employees feel that they are not adequately paid and that they are not given enough work hours, resulting in their not receiving certain fringe benefits.

Despite these problems, the picture that emerges from this study is one which would characterize the fast food job experience as a relatively positive one for Hispanic hourly fast food employees.